PREMIERE BROADCAST
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The American Experience

AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS

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The American Experience

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is a series of fascinating films about the American past. The series provides teachers and students with television programming that complements and enriches their American history courses. Each hour-long film is a self-contained story that focuses either on a major event or on an individual, reflecting conflicts, struggles and triumphs in the growth of this country.

This wide-ranging series of films captures the American past through eyewitness accounts. **The Great San Francisco Earthquake**, for example, is more than a detailed account of an American tragedy, it is also an extraordinary portrait of life in 1906, as told by those who lived through that event. **Geronimo and the Apache Resistance** is recounted by Apaches whose grandparents actually rode with Geronimo, the legendary Indian leader. The film also provides a very beautiful portrait of southwestern life in the 19th century. **The World That Moses Built** examines the power and influence of Robert Moses, the "master-builder," who influenced the face of urban America.

Women's studies, urban and labor history and minority studies are a natural complement to the films. For instance, **That Rhythm, Those Blues**, a film about black music in the 1940s and 1950s, is also a vivid portrait of a time when even music was segregated, while **Ida B. Wells** examines the career of a feminist and black activist, born in slavery, who became a reporter and led the anti-lynching campaign in America at the turn of the century. Together, these programs weave a vivid and complex tapestry of American history.

The films in THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE have been produced by the most talented documentarians in the country, with advice from leading academics. Underlying THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is a respect for diversity and a celebration of the democratic ideal.

Judy Crichton
Executive Producer

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is appropriate to American history curricula at the secondary level, and can be integrated into discussions of social, cultural and political history. This educational package consists of the following components:

Program Summaries; Curriculum/Program Tie-Ins; Questions Before Viewing; and **Questions After Viewing.**

We assume that the programs will be viewed at home or in class by students at times which may or may not correspond to topics in their American history courses. Therefore, the **Questions Before Viewing** direct the students to each program's basic theme without presupposing any special knowledge or preparation. The **Questions After Viewing** invite discussion of issues raised in the programs and are designed to encourage critical thinking. The **Curriculum/Program Tie-Ins** alert the teacher to the themes, topics, and concepts suggested by each program. They also enable teachers to identify other curriculum ties which may be pertinent to their classes.

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THE GREAT SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE

Program Summary

The 1906 earthquake and fire devastated San Francisco's booming economy, diverse ethnic neighborhoods and rich cultural life. Using remarkable archival film and still photographs, as well as the recollections of survivors, this film provides a fascinating account of San Francisco's amazing recovery following the destruction of much of the city. The film shows how the San Franciscans coped with homelessness, shortages and the threat of disease. The rebirth of San Francisco was complete by 1915, when the city hosted a World's Fair to celebrate completion of the Panama Canal.

Time: 1906-1915 **Region: San Francisco**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **U.S.Cities**
- **Immigration**
- **Ethnic Diversity**
- **Racial Discrimination**

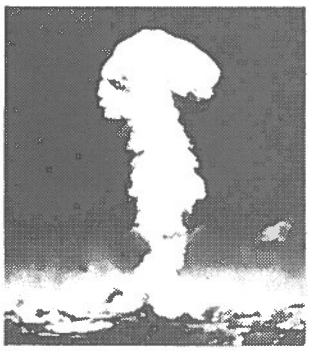
The destruction and rebuilding of San Francisco in 1906 illustrates urban development in a period when many American cities were modernizing and expanding. Scenes of the urban rail system record the growth of mass transportation while, after the earthquake, skyscrapers rising from the ruins illustrate the optimism and faith in progress characteristic of the early 1900s. Social conflicts that accompany urban growth, such as opposition to Chinese immigration, may be linked to contemporary themes of ethnic diversity and racial discrimination. Teachers might relate these themes to the segregation of Asian children in San Francisco the same year, which culminated in President Theodore Roosevelt's "Gentleman's Agreement" with Japan.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. What would happen if a major city such as New York or Tokyo were destroyed by earthquake today? Could it trigger world depression or international chaos?
2. What are the major features of modern city life? As you view the film see how many of them existed in San Francisco in 1906.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. How did San Franciscans survive during the crisis? Compare the homeless then with the homeless in many American cities today.
2. To what extent were Asian Americans victims of racial persecution? Does discrimination exist today in the United States?
3. What evidence did you see in the film of crime, slums and corruption in city government? What steps were being taken at that time to bring about reform in American cities?



RADIO BIKINI

Program Summary

This film is an account of the U.S. Navy's atomic tests at the Bikini Islands in 1946. It focuses on the massive media coverage of the tests, the uprooting of the island's population and the decision to order thousands of sailors, who knew nothing of the dangers of radiation, to clean up the target ships after the explosions. *Radio Bikini* conveys the mood of exuberance in the United States just after World War II, when the world was unaware of the dangers of radioactivity.

Time: 1946 **Region: Washington, D.C.; Bikini Islands**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **Nuclear Age**
- **Government Responsibility**
- **Foreign Policy**
- **Nuclear Disarmament**

Radio Bikini is an integral part of any unit on World War II, the birth of the atomic age, the cold war of the 1950s or the postwar era. The film encourages study of the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan and, at the same time, of the promise atomic energy held for the United States after the war. *Radio Bikini* can also spark discussion of America's naive attitude as it entered the nuclear age. Footage of severe radiation injuries will stimulate discussion of government responsibility and the dangers of nuclear arms. Students may compare the U.S. government's relocation of the Bikinians with the treatment of Native Americans or with the displacement of residents in New York City to make way for the construction projects described in *The World That Moses Built.*

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Locate the Bikini and Marshall islands. Give their latitude and longitude. How did the United States acquire these islands?
2. Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist who directed the construction and testing of the first atomic bomb in New Mexico, was so moved by the first explosion that he recalled an image from the Bhagavad Gita: "I am become death, the shatterer of worlds." What did he mean? Why did he say this?
3. Should atomic weapons and nuclear testing be banned? Why? Why not?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. Why did the United States conduct nuclear tests in the Bikini Islands in 1946? What purposes did they serve?
2. How much did the scientists or generals know about radiation at the time of the tests? To what degree is the U.S. government responsible for the men who were there?
3. How did military experts predict the atomic bomb would change the nature of warfare? How accurate were they?

INDIANS, OUTLAWS & ANGIE DEBO

photo: The Angie Debo Archive

Program Summary

As a young historian doing research in the 1930s, Angie Debo uncovered a statewide conspiracy that had deprived the Oklahoma Indians of their oil-rich land. The film describes how she overcame extraordinary difficulties to bring her work to the public, and how she became a highly respected historian whose work has been used in court cases dealing with Indian land rights and tribal sovereignty.

Time: 1890s-1930s **Region: Oklahoma**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **The Historian's Craft**
- **Native Americans**
- **Rural America (early 1900s)**
- **Women's Studies**

In describing Angie Debo's work as an historian, this film not only reveals the excitement and challenge of historical research, but explains how historians use documents and other sources to interpret the past. The film demonstrates how one dedicated person can make a difference in influencing historical events. *Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo* is also appropriate for women's studies, telling the story of a determined woman who overcame numerous obstacles to education and advancement to earn a Ph.D. and to challenge the accepted version of Indian history. The film is also pertinent to the study of the U.S. government's Indian policy, from the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887 to a law in 1924 that conferred citizenship on all Native Americans born in the United States.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. What is the role of the historian in shaping our understanding of the past? How is it possible for two historians analyzing the same documents to offer different interpretations?
2. What are the qualities of a hero or heroine? As you view the film decide if Debo is a genuine American heroine, as she has been described by some people.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. Whose point of view did Angie Debo adopt when writing history? How did it influence her conclusions? Can historians be objective?
2. How did Angie Debo expose a scheme to defraud Native Americans of oil-rich lands in the Southwest? What aspects of her research were most difficult to prove? What obstacles were most difficult for her to overcome?
3. How do you account for Debo's sensitivity to injustice? How did her own past influence her to take up the cause of the Oklahoma Indians?

ERIC SEVAREID
Not So Wild A Dream

photo: CBS News and Eric Sevareid

Program Summary

Journalist Eric Sevareid witnessed the growth of fascism firsthand in Europe during the late 1930s. He abandoned his youthful pacifism and isolationism and, as war came, recognized that U.S. intervention was crucial to the defeat of Germany. Using his extraordinary talents as a reporter, Sevareid conveyed to his American audience the pervasive evil of the Nazi regime and the mortal danger it posed to Western civilization. Based on Sevareid's best-selling memoir.

Time: 1912–1940 **Region: North Dakota; Minnesota; Europe**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **World War II**
- **U.S. Foreign Policy**
- **Isolationism**
- **The Depression**

This film highlights the shift in America's foreign policy from isolationism to growing involvement in World War II. It underscores the concepts of pacifism, isolationism and interventionism and provides scenes of Hitler's invasion of Poland, the Nazi blitzkrieg, the capture of the lowlands in Belgium and Holland and the fall of France. As Hitler's armies overran Europe, U.S. resolve to stay out of the conflict weakened, and America began supplying the British war effort. In March 1941, the U.S. Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act, ending the fiction of neutrality. Related topics are U.S. foreign policy and American commitments in the world today.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Should the United States intervene in every world crisis that it believes is a threat to democracy? Should it intervene in any such crisis? Explain.
2. If *all* the citizens of this country enjoy the privileges of democracy, should they *all* be required to defend the nation in time of war? Should pacifists be allowed to avoid combat in military service? Why?
3. Could or should the United States follow a foreign policy based on isolationism?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. Who are the "three Sevareids" shown in the film? How do they differ from each other?
2. What convinced the American people to abandon isolationism in favor of intervention in World War II? How did their experience compare with that in 1917 when the United States entered World War I?
3. Sevareid chose not to report the weakness of the French Maginot Line for fear of hurting morale. Was he right? What would you have done in his place? Why?

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ROSIE THE RIVETER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Program Summary

Eighteen million women were recruited for defense industry jobs during World War II. Responding to the urgent need for defense workers, these women coped with long shifts, often dangerous working conditions and the added aggravation of discrimination. When the war ended, they were laid off or psychologically pressured into giving up their jobs to returning GIs.

Time: 1940s **Region: Nationwide**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **World War II**
- **Industrialization**
- **Women's Studies**
- **Labor History**

This film introduces the topics of sex discrimination and the women's movement through the study of working-class women in the defense industry in World War II. It also highlights the Depression era, trade unions, the particular problems of black women at work and the role of movies and radio in helping mold public opinion during World War II. Viewing this film, students will learn about America's massive industrialization during the war, too frequently overlooked. The story of women's wartime employment focuses on the nation's defense industries and recreates the sense of urgency that existed on the homefront.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Traditionally, men have been compelled to join the army to fight wars. What have been the duties of women during wartime?
2. Have women achieved equality in the work force today? Explain.
3. What is propaganda? When is it appropriate for the government to use propaganda to influence public opinion?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. Who was "Rosie the Riveter"? What does she symbolize? How similar or different were the stories of the several "Rosies" interviewed in the film? Explain.
2. Did the role of women in World War II change traditional beliefs about women in the work force? Explain.
3. Was it fair for the government to urge women to give up jobs in industry to make room for returning GIs? Should women have acquiesced to such demands?
4. What evidence did you see of racial discrimination in the film?

GERONIMO AND THE APACHE RESISTANCE

Program Summary

This story of the legendary Apache chief Geronimo and his band of Chiricahua Apaches brings to life the bitter conflict between two opposing cultures. Although the war between the Apaches and the settlers was a war over land, the film also examines how cultural misunderstanding led to decades of struggle.

Time: 1840–1912 **Region: The Southwest; Florida**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **Native Americans**
- **American Frontier**
- **Manifest Destiny**
- **Indian Wars**

The central theme of this film revolves around the concept of Manifest Destiny during the post-Civil War years and the inevitable clash between Anglo and Native Americans. *Geronimo and the Apache Resistance* is an excellent resource for a class on the frontier, on Native Americans, or on the Indian wars. It explains how competition for land, a dwindling food supply and growing numbers of settlers led to the conflict. Perhaps the greatest value of this film is to offset lingering stereotypes of Native Americans and to encourage a more sympathetic view of their plight.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Stereotypes limit our understanding of people because they assume that all members of a particular group share identical characteristics. What are some of the common stereotypes of Native Americans? How did they arise?
2. President John F. Kennedy once commented that the treatment of the Native Americans "still affects the national conscience." What did he mean?
3. How does competition for land lead to war? As you watch the film, try to determine what factors caused the war with the Apaches.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. How did Geronimo and 37 Chiricahua Apache men, women and children manage to elude 5,000 soldiers for nearly half a year? Why did they finally decide to "come in"?
2. What did Manifest Destiny mean to Native Americans? How might their interpretation differ from that of Anglo-Americans or from that given in your American history textbook?
3. Why did the Chiricahua Apaches dislike living on reservations? What were conditions like?

DO YOU MEAN THERE ARE STILL REAL COWBOYS?

photo: John Blair

Program Summary

A year in the life of the contemporary American cowboy. We are introduced to a way of life in which the fundamentals haven't changed much over time. The film reveals that the "real" American cowboy may be a dying breed as ranchers find it increasingly difficult to cope with the economic problems that plague the cattle industry today.

Time: 1980s **Region: Wyoming**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **The Cowboy**
- **Rural Life**
- **The Cattle Kingdom**
- **Free Enterprise**

This film may conclude the study of the cattle kingdom. It counters the romantic stereotype created by such 19th-century artists as Frederic Remington while showing how the annual work cycle of the contemporary cowboy is essentially the same as it was 100 years ago. The film sheds light on the nature of American free enterprise by discussing the rancher as a small businessman, struggling with the problems of falling beef prices, constant debt and the need for efficient operation. Other topics include the age-old clash between the proponents of modernization and those who cling to an old-fashioned way of life, the role of women on the frontier and the problem of irrigation on the Great Plains.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. How does modern living affect the cattle industry? How has a changing diet affected the consumption of beef in America today?
2. Describe the cattle kingdom and the role of the cowboy in the history of the American West. As you watch the film, see if that description is still valid.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. Do you think a cowboy from the 1880s would feel out of place on a cattle ranch today? What differences and what similarities might he find?
2. Why are cattle ranchers finding it difficult to survive today? Why have generations of ranchers remained in Wyoming despite the dangers and difficulties?
3. Why is the Michelson ranch a good example of a small business enterprise? What problems does it face that are true of other businesses? Which are unique to cattle ranching?
4. What was the role of women on the ranch in 1880? How has their role changed?
5. How important is the weather in ranching?

photo: John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA

THE KENNEDY–WALLACE SHOWDOWN

(working title)

photo: UPI, Bettmann News Photos

Program Summary

In 1963, Governor George Wallace defied a federal court order granting two black students admission to the University of Alabama. This film is a step-by-step account of the showdown between the governor, who physically blocked their entrance to the university, and President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who utilized the power of the federal government to ensure desegregation as ordered by the courts. The film shows the planning strategy of each side and documents this historic confrontation.

Time: 1963 **Region: Washington, D.C.; Alabama**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **Civil Rights**
- **Black History**
- **Education**
- **Constitutional Law**

The confrontation between President John F. Kennedy and Governor George Wallace is a key event in the history of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. As a record of the showdown, the film is a tool for examining federalism and principles of constitutional law. It also documents the decision-making process in the Kennedy White House. Scenes of President Kennedy and his brother Robert, the attorney general, planning strategy against Wallace highlight the federal government's commitment to the protection of an individual's civil rights. Governor Wallace, on the other hand, justified his defiance of the federal government on the principle of states' rights, which had been a major issue leading to the Civil War.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. What does the concept "states' rights" mean? Why was it an issue during the years of the civil rights movement?
2. Governor Wallace, an avowed segregationist, said in 1963 that he would rather live a short life of principle than a long life of compromise. What did he mean?
3. In addition to the integration of public schools, what were the other goals of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s? To what extent do you think they have been achieved?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. If a state refuses to obey a federal law, how might the conflict be resolved? How was the confrontation between President Kennedy and Governor Wallace resolved?

2. Why were filmmakers allowed behind the scenes of the Kennedy-Wallace crisis? Can the film be considered a reliable source for historians in the future? Why?

FATHER CHARLES COUGHLIN: The First Electronic Evangelist

(working title)

Program Summary

This film depicts the rise and fall of a charismatic radio personality. During the Depression years, Father Charles Coughlin appealed to anti-Semitic and pro-fascist sympathies while protesting against the economic and social systems in the United States. The film examines how the "Detroit radio priest" exploited the fears and insecurities of the American people in the years just prior to World War II.

Time: 1930s **Region: Detroit, Nationwide**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **First Amendment Guarantees**
- **The Great Depression**
- **American Populism**
- **Anti–Semitism**

This film illustrates the appeal of demagogues and their exploitation of popular dissatisfaction, especially in times of economic distress, such as the Great Depression. It is useful for stimulating discussion of how vitriolic and extreme forces can gain considerable strength even in democratic societies and is a case study of anti-Semitism in the United States. Additionally, *Father Charles Couglin* can serve as a prelude to the study of World War II. The film is also appropriate for discussion of the rise and importance of broadcasting and its potential as an instrument of political and mass manipulation.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Must the media allow extreme and unpopular speakers to broadcast their views? What limits, if any, do you think there should be on freedom of speech in a democracy?
2. How do religious leaders sometimes influence politics even if they do not run for public office? Give examples and explain their importance in national or local politics.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. The dictionary defines "demagogue" as "a leader who makes use of popular prejudice and false claims and promises in order to gain power." Was Coughlin a demagogue? Should demagogues be allowed to broadcast their views? Why or why not?
2. Why did the government order the FBI to keep Coughlin and his associates under surveillance? Did that violate his rights under the Constitution? Why or why not?
3. To which elements in American society did Coughlin appeal? Why was he successful, and what accounted for his sudden decline?

THAT RHYTHM, THOSE BLUES

Program Summary

In the 1940s and 1950s, when American musicians faced racial segregation, black rhythm-and-blues singers toured the South performing in clubs, warehouses, tobacco barns, theaters and Masonic halls. The film tells the story of those R and B performers, whose music often transcended racial barriers and prepared the way for the emergence of rock 'n' roll. It shows how the success of R and B was made possible by the growing economic strength of the black community after World War II.

Time: 1945–1958 **Region: The South**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **American Culture**
- **Music History**
- **Black American Studies**
- **Racial Discrimination**

Rhythm-and-blues music profoundly influenced American music and culture. The film helps explain the origin of a unique American art form and will be appropriate for units on black American history or black contributions to American culture. It also provides a focal point for studying the development of popular music, from rhythm-and-blues to rock 'n' roll, as well as the people and tensions in the recording industry. R and B singer Ruth Brown brings these issues to life as she tells of her personal experience with the Jim Crow laws in the South during the 1940s and 1950s. The film will also be helpful in introducing U.S. social history after World War II, the growth of black radio, and the civil rights movement.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. What kinds of music are part of black culture in the United States?
2. How has black music influenced American culture, generally? How has it influenced popular music in other countries?
3. Where did rock 'n' roll come from? What is rhythm-and-blues music? How is it different from other popular forms of music?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. How did racial discrimination in the North and South differ after World War II? What effect did rhythm-and-blues music have on segregation, if any?
2. The lyrics of rhythm-and-blues songs were not vindictive nor were they about protest. What were they about? How did they reflect the needs of their audiences?
3. Why were white people interested in black music? Was it difficult for them to attend black performances?

Views of a VANISHING FRONTIER

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE

Program Summary

This is the story of naturalist Prince Maximilian of Wied and artist Karl Bodmer, who, in 1832, traveled north along the upper Missouri River to document and sketch the landscapes, villages and people of that little-known region. Using Maximilian's journal and Bodmer's exquisite paintings, the film captures fascinating aspects of a Native American culture that was already in decline.

Time: 1832-1834 **Region: Midwest; Far West**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **19th-Century Travel and Exploration**
- **Westward Expansion**
- **Native Americans**
- **Historical Anthropology**

Maximilian's journals and Bodmer's realistic and detailed paintings and drawings provide a unique portrait of Native American cultures that were being rapidly transformed by the pressures of westward expansion and policies toward Indians in the Jacksonian era. As tribal life was dramatically altered in the trans-Mississippi West, the opportunity to record the life of precontact Native American civilization was lost forever. For an excellent discussion of this remarkable adventure and the value to the historian of pictorial evidence such as Bodmer's watercolors, the teacher is referred to Chapter 5 of *After the Fact*, by James W. Davidson and Mark H. Lytle, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. If you were exploring an unknown frontier today, what would you look for? How would you record what you saw or heard? How would your methods differ from what might have been used 150 years ago?
2. What sort of information could one learn from a portrait of a Native American? How could clothing, decorative articles and weapons reveal where he lived and with whom he had had contact?

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. What was the purpose of Bodmer and Maximilian's journey? Were they successful? How did their trip compare with the 1803 expedition of Lewis and Clark?
2. How do you account for the friendly relations between the Indian chieftains and Maximilian and Bodmer?
3. Suppose Bodmer and Maximilian were exploring your town or neighborhood. How might they describe what they saw? What things might they draw and write about?

THE WORLD THAT MOSES BUILT

(working title)

photo: Courtesy of The Queens Museum

Program Summary

This is a portrait of Robert Moses, the man who has been called "the master builder" of the century. The public projects developed by Moses not only shaped the landscape of New York City but influenced urban areas across the nation. This film is about the remarkable rise and fall of a man whose grandiose ideas devastated entire neighborhoods and displaced thousands of people.

Time: 1924–1968 **Region: New York City**

CURRICULUM/PROGRAM TIE-INS

- **Urban Politics**
- **City Planning**
- **Individual Rights**
- **Leadership**

How progress often exacts a human toll lies at the heart of this film about Robert Moses and urban politics in the 20th century. The career of Robert Moses illustrates the enormous contributions of one man to a city, as well as the dangers of endowing an individual with power to set and implement policy. An unelected official, Moses was nevertheless able to develop huge projects that dispossessed and evicted thousands of people under the law of eminent domain (the right of the state to appropriate private property for the common good). This film also underscores how, in the name of progress, the needs of the poor and underprivileged can be ignored.

QUESTIONS BEFORE VIEWING

1. Robert Moses once stated that bulldozing is "just exactly what the ghettos need. They must be ruthlessly torn down." Do you agree? What rights do the residents have?
2. The Fifth Amendment states, "private property [shall not] be taken for public use [i.e. by eminent domain] without just compensation." Is this fair? Under what circumstances should the government be limited in exercising this right? Give examples.

QUESTIONS AFTER VIEWING

1. How did Moses justify the dislocation of thousands of citizens in order to build highways, parks and public buildings? Do you agree with him?
2. Are those who rent homes and apartments protected under eminent domain?
3. Since appointed government officials are not directly responsible to the electorate, how should their power be controlled?

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

HEARTS AND HANDS

This film celebrates the women quilt-makers of the 19th century. It shows how women chronicled the events of their lives and of their time by designing quilts of often surpassing beauty. It also looks at women in the labor and abolition movements, the Civil War, westward expansion, the struggles over temperance and the struggle for women's suffrage.

Time: 1820s-1890s **Region: Nationwide**

Let Us Now Praise Famous Men

(working title)

In 1936 journalist James Agee and photographer Walker Evans recorded the poverty-stricken existence of Southern sharecroppers in their classic book, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men.* Forty years later, filmmaker Carol Bell returns to Alabama to interview the surviving members of the family who had shared their intimate lives with Agee and Evans in the midst of the Great Depression.

Time: 1930s **Region: Alabama**

IDA B. WELLS

(working title)

This is the story of a courageous black woman's campaign for social justice in the late 19th century. The film shows Wells struggling against racism and sexism as a young woman in a small Mississippi town and later as a journalist working in New York. It presents the events that shaped her life and strengthened her convictions.

Time: late 1800s-early 1900s
Region: Memphis; Chicago; Missisippi

The American Experience

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Executive Producer: Judy Crichton
Senior Producer: Margaret Drain
Series Host: David McCullough

This Guide was produced by WNET/New York

Project Director: Robert A. Miller
Writer: Jerome Ruderman, Frankford High School, Philadelphia, PA
Editors: Russell H. Herman, Natasha Mostert, John Simmons
Photo Research: Ilana Pergam
Design: B.T.Whitehill

Advisors

Frances Haley, Executive Director
National Council for the Social Studies

Elliot Salow, Director of Social Studies
New York City Board of Education

WNET NEW YORK

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